Assistance for rehabilitation of ULFA activists

225. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether hundreds of ULFA activists had, of late, surrendered arms before the Assam Government after an assurance of their rehabilitation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government has asked for full assistance/reimbursement of expenses incurred/to be incurred thereon; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) 334 ULFA activists have surrendered alongwith 114 arms.

(c) and (d) A proposal for rehabilitation of surrendered militants is under consideration. No final decision has been taken yet.

Central instructions to States to curb attacks on minorities

226. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given any instructions to the State Government to check the growing attacks against minorities?

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what initiatives have been taken by Government to book the culprits who attacked the persons and properties of the Christian community?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) After the recent incidents of attack on minorities, the Chief Secretaries of the concerned States have been advised to issue suitable instructions to the district law and order authorities to respond immediately to the complaints of harassment of minorities and initiate prompt and effective action to identify and punish the guilty persons.

"Public Order" and "Police" are State subjects as per the Constitution of India. The registration, investigation and detection of crime as well as the prevention of crime are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments.

The Government is firmly of the view that acts of violence against any community, wherever and in whatever form they occur, must be dealt with sternly and exemplary punishment awarded to the perpetrators of such violence.

Smuggling of drugs along Nepal Border

227. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "ISI uses Nepali muslims for anti-India campaign" appearing in the Times of India (Mumbai), dated 22nd July, 1997;

(b) whether communal trouble and smuggling of drugs are rampant in this border area;

(c) whether intelligence department has brought these facts to Government's notice;

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government on this information and in the light of decisions arrived at in meeting of Foreign Secretaries of India and Nepal in Kathmandu in March, 1995;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the present situation regarding maintenance of law and order in Indo-Nepal borders?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (f) Reports indicate that Pak ISI has been using Nepal as a base for anti-India activities. Inputs also reveal that Nepal has become an important transit route for smuggling of narcotics, etc. Home Secretaries, and not Foreign Secretaries, of the two countries met from 8th to 11th March, 1995 in Kathmandu, where Nepal had given an assurance that its territory would not be permitted to be used against India. Regular bilateral contact through an on going high level dialogue is maintained with his Majesty's Government of Nepal to ensure closer cooperation between the security agencies of the two countries to combat trans-border crime and terrorism. Steps have also been taken to increase vigilance on the Indo-Nepal border to check the activities of undesirable elements and Government have also instructed all Central and State agencies to step up enforcement efforts in a coordinated manner.

Freeing the Police from Excessive Political Control

228. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has directed to go into the recommendations contained in Police Commission's report and suggestions of National Human Rights Commission to free the police force from its excessive political control and to constitute the force on the lines of CBI i.e., to free it from the executive control in the matter of investigation; and

(b) if so, the details of action taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Directions of the Supreme Court in W.P. (Criminal) No. 340-343 of 1993 had been brought to the notice of the State Governments for necessary action. However, Pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court dated the 20th July, 1998 in another case (WP Civil No. 310 of 1998), the Committee constituted by the Government submitted its first Report which has been filed in the Supreme Court as directed by it and this case is listed for further hearing on 22nd March, 1999.

Ban on Lotteries

226. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to ban lotteries in the country;

(b) whether any steps were taken in that regard in 1998-99;

(c) by which year lotteries would be banned in every State and at the Centre; and

(d) the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (d) A proposal to enact a comprehensive legislation to ban lotteries in the country is under active consideration at present.

Pending pension cases of freedom fighters from Bhagalpur

230. SHRI SURYANBHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of applicants approved by Central Government for freedom fighters' pension as well as those pending since 1994 upto 31.12.1998 concerning Bhagalpur District of Bihar;

(b) the names of all the applicants including widows whose cases have been rejected since 1994 till date and the reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for rejecting the applications of Smt. Urvashi Devi wife of Late Shri Kinkar Singh of P.S. Dhoraiya,